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AUTHOR Ryan, Marianne
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ABSTRACT

The first grade program of the Fairview German Bilingual School, the elementary (K-5) segment of the Cincinnati public school system's German bilingual alternative program, is described. The school provides intensive second-language instruction in German for monolingual English-speaking children with bilingualism as the objective. The school is racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse, a characteristic that is emphasized in the curriculum and in classroom interaction. In first grade, 50 minutes a day are devoted to language instruction. The entire class has 30 minutes of instruction each afternoon, and on alternating mornings, half the class has 40 minutes of immersion. The curriculum is entirely oral and fosters comprehension and speaking skills. The four first grade classes fill the entire teaching schedule of one German teacher, who has a classroom to which the students travel. The school's German specialists, who do not have elementary teaching certificates, use complete lesson-plan syllabi designed for each grade by the original program coordinators and giving precise directives for daily instructional activities. A curriculum designed in Germany for foreign-born immigrant children is used. Independent sentence construction emerges in mid-year among the ablest students. A solid foundation for comprehension and communication is laid in first grade. A five-page annotated bibliography concludes the document. (MSE)

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Fairview German Bilingual School:
A Successful Model for Elementary-School, Second-Language Learning, Part II
Laying the Foundation: German in the First Grade

Presented as part of a joint session entitled:

"German in the Elementary School: The Cincinnati Experience"

by Frederick P. Veidt, Marianne Ryan and Donald R. Jacoby

at the

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by Children: Theoretical Aspects and Practical Applications

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and the

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Part II

LAYING THE FOUNDATION: GERMAN IN THE FIRST GRADE

Marianne Ryan

As a six-year veteran in laying the foundation for German language skills with six- and seven-year-olds I would like to record observations on the introductory phase of a program that has been functioning effectively for a decade. Since materials acquisition in this field presents a special problem, I would also like to share, in a brief annotated bibliography, what published teaching aids I have found to be specifically useful with school beginners.

Established in 1974 to promote voluntary racial integration in the large urban public school system of Cincinnati, Ohio, the German-English Bilingual Alternative School (GEBAS) set out to lure students from the entire school district to two centrally-located, racially isolated neighborhood schools with declining enrollments by means of a unique offering: high-quality, intensive foreign language instruction beginning in the first grade.

All classes from Kindergarten through grade five are now consolidated at Fairview School on Stratford Street in Clifton Heights, near the University of Cincinnati campus. Urban decay and regeneration are juxtaposed in this lower middle-class area, as they are within the school. Kindergarten and first grade classes occupy a "new" building, erected in 1957, - bright, airy, and clean, but sterile and undistinguished, while the upper grades are housed in a separate building erected in 1888, a huge, ominous, turreted Cincinnati Gothic monstrosity, no doubt worthy of historical preservation. The small, bleak, black-topped playground, dwarfed by two huge television broadcasting

towers, has recently been enhanced with sturdy climbing equipment, a gift of our superbly energetic parent organization. Fair is the view of the distant silvery bend of the Ohio River, shabby the immediate environment in which a venturesome program prospers.

While academic excellence has been a primary goal of GEBAS from the outset, selective admission by academic criteria has not been permitted. Neither language aptitude tests nor screening interviews are allowed. Aside from considerations of racial balance, students are admitted in order of application.

A few elementary statistics might sketch a profile of my present First Grade class. In four first grade homerooms 118 students commenced German in September 1984. At mid-year, the end of January 1985, 111 remain, with an average class size of 28. The sexes are equally distributed, girls having a majority of only one, and the races very nearly so: 45.9% are black, 2.7% are oriental, 51.4% are white. For 16.2% of the students, our "walkers", the neighborhood school has not closed, but merely added "fringe benefits". Most students arrive by yellow bus from near and far especially for those "fringe benefits". Among twenty-nine magnet programs available in 1984 they chose the German Bilingual Alternative. Why? In an informal letter/questionnaire, which I sent to the parents of all first graders at the beginning of the school year, and to which 82.2% responded, by far the most frequently cited reason, by 57.7%, was the general academic reputation of the GEBAS program. Another 29.9% were convinced of the value of foreign language study at an early age, but only 8.3% admitted to any German being spoken in their home, while another 16.4% mentioned a German background or some other German experience. Thus, with fewer than one fourth of the students having any "German Connection", ours is not a bilingual maintenance program responding to the needs of a minority

culture. Among the first graders, 15.5% have siblings or relatives already in the program, and for 12.4% it was the proximity of the school that mattered most. (Since several reasons were given by many, these percentages total more than 100.)

The first grade student body reflects our modern fractured society: fewer than one half of the children (47.7%) live in a "traditional" family, with both their original parents. (Another 2.7% have step-parents.) Considerable financial distress is evidenced by the fact that 45.9% receive free and 5.4% reduced fee lunch at school, totalling 51.3% on nutrition assistance. The occupational status of their parents varies greatly: from construction worker to construction company owner, from university professor to pre-school teacher, from sales clerk to sales manager, from police sergeant to social worker, from housewife to computer programmer, from mechanic to engineer, from attorney to activity therapist, from the self-employed to the unemployed, from investment counselor to clergyman to funeral director. Since students' cumulative records are frequently imprecise, incomplete and out-of-date, a socio-economic classification was not attempted. Suffice it to say that the range is great.

In academic achievement, as measured by the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test (administered to kindergarteners in the spring of each year), the range is equally great. In a normally distributed population 23% would fall into the <u>below</u> average range (stanines 1 - 3), 54% into the <u>average</u> range (stanines 4 - 6), and 23% into the <u>above</u> average range (stanines 7 - 9). In the GEBAS first grade class of 1984/5 20.7% are <u>below</u> average, 43.2% are <u>average</u>, while 36.0% score in the <u>above</u> average range. Thus 79.3% of our present first graders stand at or above average in achievement, only slightly better than the national average of 77%. The first grade student body is not elitist,

despite a greater than normal share of the ablest students; 17.1% are expected to be retained, while 10.8% are presently repeating. I perceive a high correlation between general academic achievement and first grade German language proficiency. While even the best first graders are slow in acquiring vocabulary and syntax, those experiencing difficulty in most aspects of school work are rarely outstanding students of German. In this diversity lies the challenge!

While funding for the German bilingual program has never been luxurious, it has been consistent, even in times of extreme fiscal emergency. Supernumerary language specialists represent the costliest recurrent item of the budget. The initially very generous appointment of two full-time co-ordinators made it possible to overcome two obstacles to long-term success: a scarcity of teachers with ideal formal qualifications and a dearth of published language material in German suitable for young children. In 1974 Margith Stern and Larry Stevenson were real innovators, though nowadays their bilingual concept seems conservative, little more than an expansion of earlier FLES programs. However, their model of fractional immersion, fully integrated into the schedule and curriculum, and carefully programmed for continuity and articulation, is seen by the GEBAS community as the key to balanced success for our type of student.

In first grade an average of 50 minutes per day is allocated to German instruction. The entire class has 30 minutes of German in the afternoon, and on alternating mornings about half the class is "immersed" for another 40 minutes, the others remaining to be instructed in English. Morning groups are selected by the homeroom teacher to coincide with reading or mathematics groupings. In first grade both homogeneous and heterogeneous morning combina-

tions result. All are exposed to essentially the same entirely oral curriculum. Comprehension and speaking skills are fostered in first grade. Reading and writing are deliberately not taught until second grade. Four first grade classes fill the teaching schedule of one "itenerant" language specialist with a fixed abode: a separate, full-sized classroom that can be arranged to suit distinct paedagogic and aesthetic needs. Our small students migrate, not the teacher, as in earlier years of the program.

All German specialists appointed to our program combine high academic qualifications (M.A. minimum) with genuine bilingual proficiency. None, however, have elementary certification. To remedy the lack of age-appropriate experience and materials the original co-ordinators began the time-consuming but ultimately rewarding tradition of writing, for each grade level, a voluminous lesson-plan syllabus (of some 200 pages each) containing precise directives for daily instructional activities. Given the liberty to adjust, abridge, extend or supplement, this format is appreciated by teachers for the consistency and assurance it provides - and the labor it saves.

The curriculum developed by Stern and Stevenson, the thrust of which has not been changed in recent revisions, is an eclectic one. Linguistically, methodologically and philosophically it is most heavily indebted to Hermann Schuh's Komm bitte! project (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1972), the Grundkurs of which forms the structural framework of our foundation year. Originally developed for the instruction of the children of foreign workers in German-speaking countries, this audio-lingual course is equally suitable for teaching German as a second language to young elementary-school-age children in foreign countries. It assumes no prior knowledge of German, as does our first grade curriculum. Approximately one third of the first graders

are new to the school, the remainder repeating the year or graduating from our kindergarten, where German instruction is limited to one hour per week. The learning of colors, numbers, songs and games breaks the ground, but the foundation for coherent discourse is not laid until first grade.

Komm bitte! implicitly embraces - but with moderation - many second language teaching techniques being advocated at present: its action-centered fun-and-games approach is non-threatening and communicative, its psychology is appealing to seven-year-olds, its limited scope is manageable within our time-frame for most of our students. Its carefully structured progression guides the teacher in "direct method" presentations that do not overwhelm and discourage school beginners.

The linguistic material presented in the 24 units of the Grundkurs is summarized in large type on a mere five small pages of the "Einführung" (pp 7-11). It provides the core for daily lessons of about 25 minutes' duration over an entire school year. Its judicious selectivity strives to afford maximum opportunity for correct, but genuine communications. Authentic quality matters to Schuh, not inaccurate quantity. This linguistic material is presented in cohesive models: phrases and short sentences that form building blocks for dialogues that gradually increase in length and complexity. Puppets frequently aid in conveying these dialogues in dramatic, supposedly self-explanatory situations. These are then imitated by the children, first chorally, then individually, acted out, re-combined in new situations with subtly different connotations. Eventually, with prompting, long exchanges can take place. It is expected that in the course of the year students progress from a vague global to an ever more precise understanding of the selected structures.

In an action-centered approach, as the title would imply, the principal

emphasis is on verbs and their varying forms. Of the approximately 190 words prescribed by Schuh in the Grundkurs only 13 are nouns: Auto 'car', Ball 'ball', Puppe 'doll', Tasche 'bag', Buch 'book', Wagen 'car', Fenster 'window', Tür 'door', Schrank 'closet', Rad 'bicycle', Roller 'scooter', Eis 'ice cream', and Pflaster 'band-aid'. The three toys Ball, Auto and Puppe assume generic status in an attempt - largely futile - to impress German gender classification upon the non-analytic minds of seven-year-olds. Against the advice of Schuh and in conformity with tradition our own syllabus greatly extends the range of nouns to be learnt. Care is taken, however, to embed these nouns into the syntactical framework provided by Schuh. Some 140 supplementary nouns cover conventional topics in elementary courses: clothing (17), parts of the body (24), days of the week (7), weather (3), animals (24), family (7), birthday celebrations (4), foods (32), house, rooms and furniture (15), money and shopping (5).

Schuh introduces only eight adjectives: fertig 'finished', schön 'beautiful', gross 'large', klein 'small', krank 'sick', schnell 'fast', and langsam 'slow'. We add many a word of praise and criticism (for global comprehension only!), as well as alt 'old', neu 'new', jung 'young', lang 'long', kurz 'short', dick 'fat', dünn 'thin', laut 'loud', and leise 'soft, low'.

More than one half of the entire vocabulary introduced in the Grundkurs consists of verbs and their varying forms (86). Age-appropriate action words, they are internalized through total physical involvement, naturally and spontaneously. In order of appearance these are: kommen 'come', dürfen 'be allowed', machen 'make,do', sein 'be', zeigen 'show', haben 'have', spielen 'play', holen 'fetch', helfen 'help', können 'be able', gehen 'go', sagen 'say', wissen 'know', warten 'wait', fahren 'drive, ride', fragen 'ask', gehören

'belong', verlieren 'lose', weinen 'cry', suchen 'look for', finden 'find', läuten 'ring', klopfen 'knock', klatschen 'clap', flüstern 'whisper', rufen 'call', husten 'cough', schlafen 'sleep', bluten 'bleed', fangen 'catch', hinfallen 'fall down', weh tun 'hurt', sehen 'see'. Of course, these are not fully conjugated from the very first encounter. Instead, various inflections and word order patterns are very gradually introduced, with the present tense prevailing until Unit 20, close to the end of the academic year. The present perfect tense of strong and weak verbs may be comprehended, but is certainly not mastered by the end of first grade. Imperative and interrogative forms are amply practiced, as are the first and second person singular indicative, while the third person singular and plural forms appear quite late (Units 17 and 19). The polite form is deferred until second grade. The verb kommen is used generically: its usage pattern illuminates Schuh's methodology. "Komm!" (Come!) is the core of Unit 1, "Komm bitte rein!" (Please come in!) of Unit 2, "Komm bitte nicht!" (Please don't come!) of Unit 3, "Komm bitte mit!" (Please come along!) of Unit 4. "Darf ich kommen?" (May I come?) features in Unit 6, "Soll ich kommen?" (Shall I come?) in Unit 9, "Dann kommst du!" (Then it is your turn) in Unit 12, "Ich weiss, wer kommen soll" (I know who shall come) in Unit 13, "er/sie kommt" (he/she is coming) in Unit 17, "wir kommen alle" (we are all coming) in Unit 19, "er/sie ist gekommen" (he/she has come) in Unit 20, "wir sind alle gekommen" (we have all come) in Unit 22. Entrance and opening routines, drills, games, and dialogues, afford regular opportunities for verb practice. Schuh's verbal largesse for active usage is only slightly extended in our syllabus with verbs relating to supplementary topics like weather, clothing, foods, and shopping. Passive comprehension ranges widely, fostered by giving instructions for all activities in German and by the learning of

rhymes and songs.

Crucial to authentic communication, according to Schuh ("Einführung", (p. 27), is the intuitive application of invariables (including adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interrogatives and exclamations), which receive commensurate emphasis amongst his structures (56/190). Especially appealing to children are the snappy repartees of casual conversations and the many almost untranslatable exclamations--ach so 'oh', ach ja 'oh yes', o ja 'oh yes', na endlich 'at last', mal 'for a bit', denn 'then', na so etwas! 'well now', schade! 'a pity', Entschuldigung! 'Sorry!', Vorsicht! 'look out!', bestimmt 'certainly', natürlich 'of course', ein bisschen 'a little' ... which are skillfully woven into the very earliest exchanges, and mimicked with delight.

Remarkably effective in this context are the Tonband-Bildszenen of Units 12, 15, 18 and 21. On tape, familiar linguistic material is fused into extensive conversations, with sequential colored illustrations depicting the progression of action, cartoon-style. The tape-picture scenes deal with recurrent problems of social interaction amongst youngsters: taking turns, resolving disagreements (painfully with agression or sensibly with compromise), helping and sharing, concern and cooperation. Children are attentive, they imitate with alacrity the distinctive voices and expressive intonations of the young speakers, they applaud spontaneously and evaluate episodes critically. The introductory scene (12 a) is never surpassed in favor. Most students are satiated, however, well before they can recall the dialogues for smooth reenactment without prompting.

Prompting, indeed, seems to be the despairing instructor's main function for some six months of the first year, while students appear to be repeating the dialogue lines quite mechanically, when suddenly the ablest and most out-

going begin to use acquired patterns independently, playfully, even wittily--but not always accurately! "Ich sehe die Unterhose. Die ist weiss und grau und bedeckt" (I can see the underpants. They are white and grey and covered.) "Frau Ryan, du bist böse. Du bist draussen!" (Mrs. Ryan, you are naughty. You are outside.) "Er habe die Haare ein bisschen weg." (His hair is a little gone.) "Ich habe zwei Brüder. Meine Brüder haben Schokoladeneier. Kleine. Ich nicht!" (I have two brothers. My brothers have chocolate eggs. Little ones. I don't!). Simple sentences - like snowdrops, harbingers of spring.

Just as weeds will grow among flowers, Hermann Schuh's Komm bitte! has its trouble-spots. It seems excessively restrictive to defer the use of the indefinite article until Unit 16 and third person singular verb forms until Unit 18. It is unlikely that one can encourage children to play "catch" in the classroom (Units 2 and 17) so as to learn verb forms affektgeladen 'emphatically' and yet have a controlled environment where grammatical insights are commonplace. It is unfortunate that the Geräuschreihe 'sound series' of Unit 18 with verbs like klopfen 'knock' and klatschen 'clap', husten 'cough', weinen 'cry', and lachen 'laugh' has to be taught just when Spring Fever is peaking. It appears impossible to play games with twenty-eight volatile school beginners without being authoritarian many a time. Yet, judiciously applied, Schuh's "leisure-pleasure" principle taps the eagerness of first graders to communicate without inhibition, without resentment at corrections, with excellent pronunciation and intonation, within the limited realm of their concerns.

Schuh's skeletal "200 Wörter und was man damit machen kann" (200 Words and what one can do with them) is easily doubled in our syllabus; and so are the troubles of vocabulary learning. In an oral course all review must take place in the classroom, and it should be brief, frequent, varied and fun. Visuals

are mounted in gender groups (masculine on the left, neuter in the center, feminine on the right) on the Bildtafel 'picture board' and drilled in varied ways: by pointing and individual or choral repetition with changing speeds, intonations and rhythms. Hints on novel procedures are sprinkled throughout the syllabus and more are always wanted. Realia - culturally authentic or unusual ones are sought, while fashionable American ones are avoided to limit the impulsive injection of English - are manipulated in a multitude of guessing games. A Nikolaussack 'Santa's sack' made of burlap has turned out to be an ideal container for such vocabulary re-inforcement games. Vocabulary illustrations are colored at the teacher's direction, personal Bildtafeln 'picture boards' are pasted up, paper dolls are cut out and dressed by boys and girls alike (with outlines for such activities conveniently supplied in the syllabus), bingo games (mostly teacher-made) are played, counting and finger rhymes and songs are learnt. Near the end of the year students can and do appreciate familiar stories like "Goldhaar und die drei Bären" (Goldilocks and the Three Bears), "Hänsel und Gretel" (Hansel and Gretel) and "Rotkäppchen" (Little Red Riding Hood) entirely in German.

Although less than twenty percent of the school day is devoted to second language instruction, a solid foundation for comprehension and communication skills in German is laid in the first grade. In a multi-ethnic setting, where a student can playfully say to the teacher "Du bist meine Mutti!" (You are my mom) to be corrected swiftly but without rancor "Nein, sie weiss, du schwarz" (No, she [is] white, you [are] black), students begin to appreciate cultural diversity before stereotypes are firmly rooted. By tasting German foods - sweet Gummibärchen 'gummy bears' and Nutella, not Sauerkraut -, by seeing German homes on slides, by lighting real candles on an advent wreath or pine

branch, children are enticed to look a little beyond the hills of Cincinnati. Armed with several hundred German words firmly fitted into Hermann Schuh's "structures", they might already not be totally lost by the real Rhine.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Textbooks

Göbel, Heinz, Traudel Müller and Martha Schneider. Du und Ich: Unterrichtspraktisches Handbuch für Deutsch als Zweitsprache im Kindergarten. Best.-Nr 49990

Medienvorlagen. Best.-Nr 49991

Liederheft. Best.-Nr 49992

Berlin: Langenscheidt, 1983.

U.S.A.: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc.

46 - 35 54th Road

Maspeth, NY 11378

A treasure-trove of creative ideas, songs, games and media that can be integrated with Komm bitte!

Schuh, Hermann. Komm bitte! Ismaning bei München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1972. 3rd ed. 1979.

U.S.A.: Midwest European Publications, Inc.

915 Foster Street

Evanston, IL 60201

Basic text for the first grade syllabus of the Fairview German Bilingual School in Cincinnati, Ohio.

2. Visual Aids

American Guidance Service. Peabody Language Development Kits. Stimulus Cards for Level #1. Minnesota: AGS, 1965.

Large, clear illustrations, though many are outdated.

Bruna, Dick. Animal Frieze. London: Methuen Children's Books Ltd., 1975.

_____. 1 2 3 Frieze. London: Methuen Children's Books, Ltd., 1974

Methuen Children's Books Ltd.

11 Fetter Lane

London EC4P 4EE

Colorful, excellent for long-term display.

Family Face Puppets (White) No. 1185

(Black) No. 1186

Animal Face Puppets No. 1189

Instructo Corporation, Paoli, Pennsylvania 19301

Pienkowski, Jan. Colours Frieze

Homes Frieze. Gallery Five F/65 1977.

Weather Frieze.

William Heinemann Ltd.

10 Upper Grosvenor St.

London WIX 9PA

These friezes, when trimmed of their English captions, make useful and well-liked displays for regular practice.

Reidel, Marlene. Eine Weltkarte für Kinder: Grossposter. 108/80 cm.

Best.-Nr 758

Kinderreime. Grossposter 98/114 cm. Best.-Nr 694.

Sellier Verlag GmbH

Erfurter Str. 4

D-8057 Eching bei München.

Many beautifully illustrated posters, friezes and books for young children are available from the same publisher.

3. Song Books and Records

Haffner, Gerhard, ed. Unsere schönsten Volkslieder. Mit Noten zum Singen und Spielen am Klavier. München: Delphin, 1979.

_____. Grosses Buch der Weihnachtslieder. Mit Noten zum Singen und Spielen am Klavier. München: Delphin, 1979 (?).

Kreusch-Jacob, Dorothee. Ravensburger Liederspielbuch für Kinder. Ravensburg: Otto Maier Verlag, 1978.

Over 70 songs and verses with practical and creative suggestions for activities to accompany traditional and modern songs and games.

Grüger, Heribert and Johannes. Die Lieder der Liederfibel: Die schönsten Kinderlieder zum Mitsingen. Kindermusikstudio Saarbrücken. Leitung: Christa Frischkorn. Schwann: Hören und Lernen H+L 103 Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1977.

_____. Weihnachts Liederfibel mit Schallplatte. Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1976.

Sing mit - Spiel mit: 22 fröhliche Kinderlieder zum Mitsingen. Schwann Hören & Lernen H+L 102 Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1976.

The records and Bildernotenbücher produced by the Pädogogischer Verlag Schwann-Bagel GmbH, Düsseldorf, are eminently suitable for classroom teaching because of their simplicity, clarity, pitch and speed. Texts of songs are not provided. Ample material for early elementary grades, despite some duplication.

4. Games

Baird, Mary. International Bingo. New York: Gessler, 1982.

Illustrations only have been used to make composite Bingo games.

Number Bingo. Trend Enterprises, Inc. T-102.

Liebowitz, Dorothy Gabel. Basic Vocabulary Builder: 32 Duplicating Masters, each containing 16 illustrations of basic vocabulary words grouped by subject.

National Textbook Company

4255 W. Touhy Ave.

Lincolnwood, IL 60646 - 1975

Selected illustrations are repeatedly used in the curriculum for discrimination testing, for composing Bingo games and for making gender-grouped Bildtafeln.

Elstner, Frank. Spiel mit: Das grosse Spiele-Buch des Deutschen Sportbundes für Sport, Spiel und Spass. Dortmund: BAKA-Druck, 1979.

Indoor and outdoor games for all age groups.

Glonnegger, Erwin. Spiele - Spiele - Spiele. Ravensburg: Otto Maier Verlag, 1965. Pocket book edition 1977.

Gives instructions for traditional children's games, including "Faules Ei" which is manageable with an entire class on the playground.

Neue Kinderspiele: 260mal Spiel und Spass für 4- bis 12jährige.

Erlenbach + München: Pamir Verlag, 1979.

Very well organized and clear instructions for many games suitable for first graders.

5. Slides

Inter Nationes. Kultureller Tonbanddienst.

D-5300 Bonn-Bad Godesberg

Kennedyallee 91 - 103

Excellent sets of slides and other cultural material may be obtained free of charge by schools, not individual teachers, from Inter Nationes. Cultural material suitable for first graders may be culled from the following sets:

Was möchten Sie wissen? 70 slides

Das Land, in dem wir leben. 180 slides

Themen aus dem Alltag. 100 slides

Wer kommt mit? - Eine Reise durch die Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 110 slides

6. Filmstrips

Die drei Bären (Goldilocks and the Three Bears)

Cat. #7120 or #7121

Gessler Publishing Co., Inc.

900 Broadway

New York, NY 10003 - 1291

Hänsel und Gretel (Hansel and Gretel) Cat. #S - 5010

Rotkäppchen (Little Red Riding Hood) Cat. #S - 5020

Catalogue of German Materials

Goldsmith's Music Shop, Inc.

301 East Shore Rd.

Great Neck, NY 11023